THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) The Government has announced industrial incentive packages providing various fiscal concessions/incentives for the North Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh & Uttaranchal. The package(s) for these States are hilly, remote and inaccessible, besides facing internal disturbances. As the State of Gujarat faces no such geographical adversities, there is no proposal to extend any incentives for industries.

Industrial Growth Centres in Tamil Nadu

173. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) how many industrial growth centres have been opened in the country alongwith the number of such centres opened in Tamil Nadu;

(b) the funds provided by Government to the Industrial growth centres in Tamil Nadu during last three years; and

(c) the number of such centres proposed to be opened in future in Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) Under the Growth Centre Scheme, 71 Growth Centres have been sanctioned throughout the country. Out of these, three Growth Centres, namely; Erode (Periyar Distt.), Oragadam (Kancheepuram Distt.) and Gangai Kondan (Tirunelveli Distt.) have been allocated to the State of Tamil Nadu. No central assistance has been released to these Growth Centres during the last three years. There is no proposal to set any more Growth Centres in Tamil Nadu.

Annual Expenditure of MPEDA

174. SHRI V. HANUMATHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the annual expenditure of MPEDA in 2003-04, 2004-05 and the projected expenditure in 2005-06; and

(b) what are the reasons for enhancing the budget?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The annual expenditure of the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), under plan head for the year 2003-2004 was Rs. 40.50 crore. For the year 2004-2005, there is a provision of Rs. 44 crore this head. The project outlay for the year 2005-06 is Rs. 52 crore.

(b) Some of the reasons for making higher allocation are i) the expansion and diversification of aquaculture; ii) additional projects for technological development in hatcheries, farms etc. to promote scampi, seabass/ grouper culture, production of artemia cyst and lobster fattening etc.; and iii) to upgrade facilities in pre-processing and processing units to meet the European Union (EU) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) quality and hygienic standard.

Trade Deficit

175. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether trade deficit during April-December, 2004 has widened;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether imports during the first three quarters of the financial year 2004-05 has also increased substantially;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken to contain the imbalance in exports and imports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A trade deficit amounting to US $20.15 billion was recorded during April-December, 2004-05 which is 71.34% higher than US $11.76 billion recorded during the corresponding period of previous year.

(c) and (d) Imports during the first three quarters i.e, April-December, 2004-05 are valued at US$ 73.65 billion respresenting an increase of 33.64% over the corresponding period of previous year. The main reasons for increase in imports are the sharp increase in crude oil prices and gold prices in the world market and increase in demand of inputs for